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# SOCIOLOGY IN TODAY'S WORLD

*Third Edition*

Brian Furze  
Pauline Savy, Robert Webb, Sara James,  
Theresa Petray, Robert J. Brym, John Lie

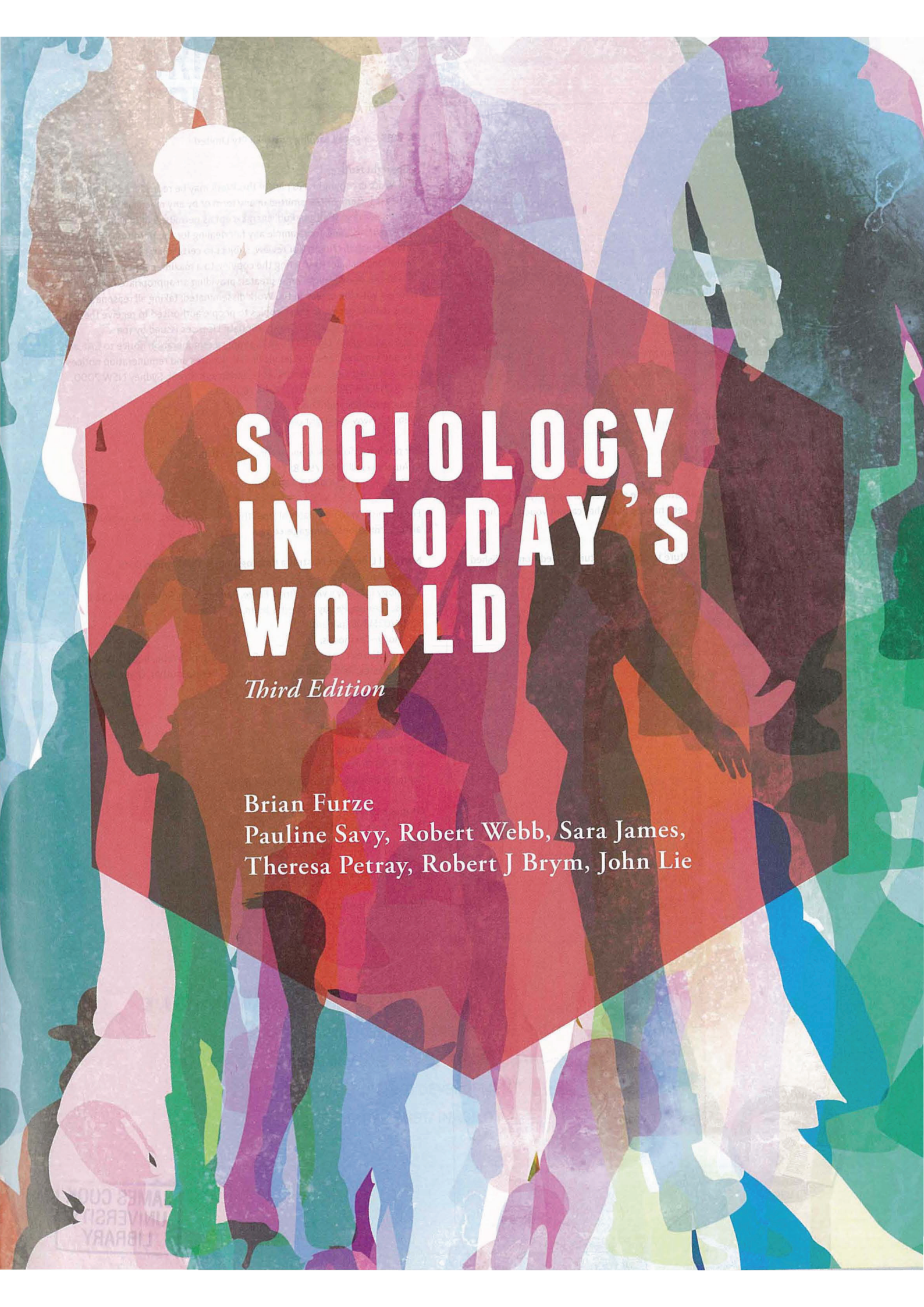












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# PREFACE

Welcome to the study of sociology in today's world!

Today's world is a complex place; its many wonders and challenges reflect the inquisitiveness, daring, desires and goodwill of human beings over the centuries. And as the world continues to change and bring new ways of living with and relating to others, each of us is involved. Even if we feel that our daily lives are mundane and predictable, our small-scale roles, relationships, aspirations and achievements are unavoidably part of a bigger physical and social world; that is, as individuals we are tied to our societies as both product and creators in a relationship that is sometimes comfortable and sometimes uneasy. This at times tense relationship between individuals and their societies sparked early sociological pursuits. It continues to drive contemporary sociological interest in the way that all levels of social life are organised and the impact of this organisation on the capacity of individuals and groups to live relatively healthy, peaceful and fulfilled lives.

For Australians and New Zealanders, questions about our opportunities to achieve such lives are framed by our expectations of democratic society, our rights and freedoms. We expect to be able to get on with our lives and shape our individual identities through a variety of choices about our gender, occupation, political allegiance, religion, family formation and so on. At the same time we know that even in democratic nations such as ours, many people are hampered in their strivings to gain the basic necessities such as good nutrition, housing, education and work. Many of the same negative social conditions that occupied the minds of early sociologists exist in parts of the world today where poverty, forced labour, oppression, hunger and disease characterise the daily lives of millions of people.

Sociology in today's world is a very large and important enterprise. Its focus is both wide and narrow.

It continues to develop ways to identify and analyse the social characteristics of the many worlds, from global to local and intimate spaces, which we construct and inhabit. As you read this text you will see the scope and application of sociological thinking across the increasingly complex domains of social life that pattern our worlds and frame expressions of who we are and how we relate to others. *Sociology in Today's World* drafts the familiar social contours of the world that readers, particularly those who live 'Down Under' in Australia and New Zealand, will recognise as their own. It offers analyses of social situations and circumstances that perhaps we take for granted and accept as being just 'how things are' or unchangeable. Importantly, it helps you to see your place in the world, to figure out how to navigate through it and think about how to improve it.

*Sociology in Today's World* is an introduction to the discipline as well as a 'staking out' of the territory of sociology. It maps the ways in which sociology understands things and it demonstrates how sociological knowledge can be used. We wrote this book to show undergraduate students that sociology can help them make sense of their lives, however certain or uncertain those lives appear to be. By revealing the opportunities and constraints you face, sociology can help to teach you who you are and what you can become in this particular social and historical context. We cannot know what the future will bring, but we can at least know the choices we confront and the likely consequences of our actions. From this point of view, sociology can help us create the best possible future. This end has always been sociology's principal justification and so it should remain today. We hope that this text pulls you into both sociological thinking and practical action. It may prompt you to work towards social justice and equality for tomorrow's world.



## Distinctive features

We have kept sociology's main purpose and relevance front and centre in *Sociology in Today's World*, through four distinctive features:

### 1 Drawing connections between one's self and the social world.

Two devices are used to make clear how students' personal experiences are connected to the larger social world. Firstly, key sociological ideas are illustrated by examples from popular culture, both local and abroad, that resonate deeply with student interests and experiences.

Secondly, several unique pedagogical features are developed to draw the connection between students' experiences and the larger social world. **Using your sociological imagination** poses questions on topics throughout the book. In this feature, we repeatedly challenge students to consider how and why their own lives conform to, or deviate from, various patterns of social relations and actions. We also engage with contemporary debates with this feature. We set out alternatives on a range of pressing social issues, most of them local, and teach students that sociology can be a matter of the most urgent practical importance. Students also learn that when you use your sociological imagination, you link together what C. Wright Mills calls society, history, and biography, to see the structures that influence our lives. **Sociology at the movies** takes a universal and popular element of contemporary culture and renders it sociologically relevant. We provide brief reviews of movies and highlight the sociological issues they raise and the sociological insights they contain. We use a variety of films, old and new, local and international, to show the diverse ways that sociological thinking can be applied to everyday life, and to show how popular culture influences the way that we understand social issues.

**Get online** is a feature that links the ideas in chapters to content on the Internet, with web-links that direct students to more learning resources and information in websites, articles, reports and media clips.

2 **Diversity and a global perspective.** Our lives are shaped by forces beyond our shores, and we can learn much by looking at the experiences of other countries, especially those we seem to be familiar with through popular culture. Diversity and globalisation are prominent themes of this book and so we make frequent use of cross-national comparisons. We use plenty of local examples, and couple these with international details to show how Australia and New Zealand fit within the wider world. The authors Brian Furze, Pauline Savy, Sara James, Theresa Petray, Robert Webb and Anthony Welch draw upon a diversity of experiences and backgrounds to provide insights into both the local and international contexts. These local contributors are known for their particular sociological expertise and show the distinctive sociocultural features of Australia and New Zealand and how they relate to the rest of the world. At an international level, Robert Brym and John Lie bring to the book a wealth of experience gained from living in many countries of the world and from being multilingual members of racial and ethnic minorities.

3 **Currency.** We have found that sociological research that is linked to recent social issues and examples of social change, help to support students' learning about sociological approaches, making the discipline more appealing to students. We include findings and analyses that show how recent research issues are connected to the lives of real flesh-and-blood women and men, and how sociology is related to students' experiences and existential concerns.

Every book also bears the imprint of its time. *Sociology in Today's World* incorporates not only a range of recent findings in sociology, but also recent theoretical innovations in the sociological universe. Functionalism, while still important, is less influential than it once was. Feminism is an important theoretical perspective in its own right. Conflict theory and symbolic interactionism have become internally differentiated. Highly influential new theoretical



perspectives, such as postmodernism and social constructionism, have emerged, and not all of them fit neatly into the old categories. We have adopted a combination of these approaches in different contexts to provide a comprehensive picture of cutting-edge sociological study.

- 4 **What to think versus how to think.** *Sociology in Today's World* shows students both *what* to think about a subject and *how* to think about it from a particular disciplinary perspective. To be sure, it contains definitions, literature reviews and standard pedagogical aids such as **Learning outcomes**, **Summaries**, **Questions to consider**, **Web resources**

and a **Glossary**. However, we devote much attention to show how sociologists think. We do not just refer to tables and graphs but analyse them. We encourage students to think critically about information. When the evidence warrants, we reject theories and endorse others. Our aim is to present a less antiseptic, more realistic, and therefore intrinsically exciting account of how professional sociologists practise their craft. Said differently, *Sociology in Today's World* does not present sociology as a set of immutable truths carved in stone tablets. Instead, it demonstrates how sociologists actually go about the business of solving sociological puzzles.



# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Robert Webb** is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. His teaching and research interests include sociology of deviance, Indigenous offenders, Māori social issues and state relations, and transplantation and identity. Robert is a co-editor of the *New Zealand Sociology Journal* and a member of the editorial board of the *MAI Journal*.

**Sara James** is a sociologist at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia. She was born in the United Kingdom and grew up in Australia. Her research interests are in the sociology of work and cultural sociology. Her PhD research, using in-depth interviews, looked at the significance of work in the lives of individuals, with a focus on vocation and the work ethic. She is particularly interested in the ways in which people find meaning in a secular society.

**Theresa Petray** is a Lecturer in Sociology at James Cook University in Townsville, Australia. She grew up in New York state and studied sociology in the United States. She travelled to Thailand and Ethiopia for sociological research before beginning her PhD in Australia. She researches social change, protest, social media, and particularly Australian Aboriginal activism, and is an active member of The Australian Sociological Association.

**Robert J Brym** is Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto and the 2007 winner of the Northrop Frye Award, given annually to a faculty member for innovation in teaching and conveying the importance of research to students. In 2010, Brym was awarded the University of Toronto President's Teaching Award, which recognises 'sustained excellence in teaching, research in teaching, and the integration of teaching and research'. Brym's favourite course is introductory sociology, which he teaches regularly. He has published widely on politics and society in Russia, Canada and the Middle East, and is currently researching collective and state violence in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. He was elected to the Royal Society of Canada (Canada's National Academy) in 2008.

**John Lie** was born in South Korea, grew up in Japan and Hawaii, and attended Harvard University. Currently Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, he has taught at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, Harvard University and University of Illinois

at Urbana-Champaign in the United States, as well as at universities in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and New Zealand. His main research interests are comparative macrosociology and comparative race and ethnic relations.

This edition's content is based on the excellent work appearing in previous editions by Brian Furze and Pauline Savy.

**Brian Furze** formerly taught in sociology at La Trobe University's Albury/Wodonga campus. His research focuses on community-based conservation, natural resource management and development in mountainous regions of Australia and Asia.

**Pauline Savy** is a sociologist based at the John Richards Initiative at the Albury/Wodonga campus of La Trobe University. She continues her longstanding interest in researching and writing about the social circumstances of aged people with a particular focus on aged care in rural locations.

## Chapter contributors

**Anthony Welch** (Chapter 10) is Professor of Education, University of Sydney. A longstanding analyst of Australian education, he specialises in both national and international educational policy and practice, and cross-cultural analysis and research. The author or editor of 10 books and numerous chapters and articles, including in several languages, Anthony has extensive national and international experience and consultancy expertise in several countries, including in the Asia Pacific region. He has contributed numerous works on practical reform and policy issues, comparative research, cross-cultural interaction and higher education reforms. A Fulbright Scholar, his two most recent books are *Higher Education in Southeast Asia* and *ASEAN Industries and the Challenge from China*, both published in 2011.

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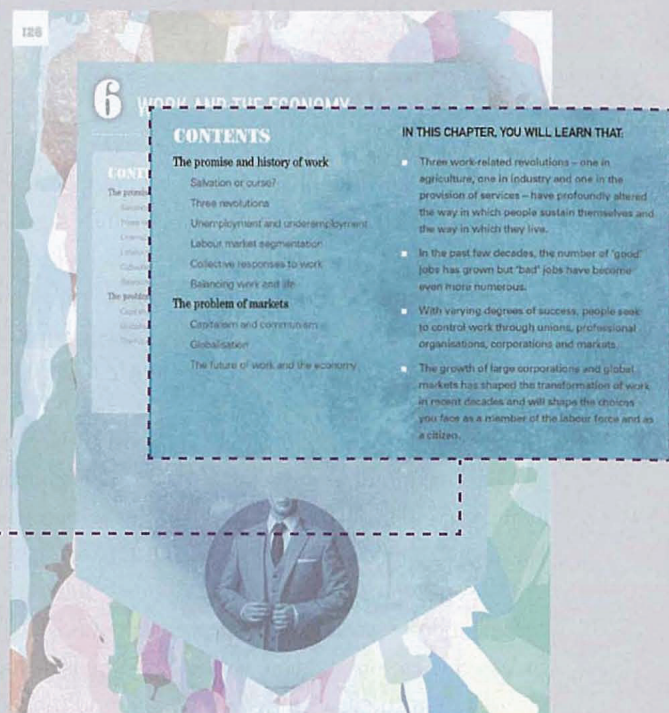


As you read this text you will find a number of features in every chapter to enhance your study of sociology and help you understand how the theory is applied in the real world.

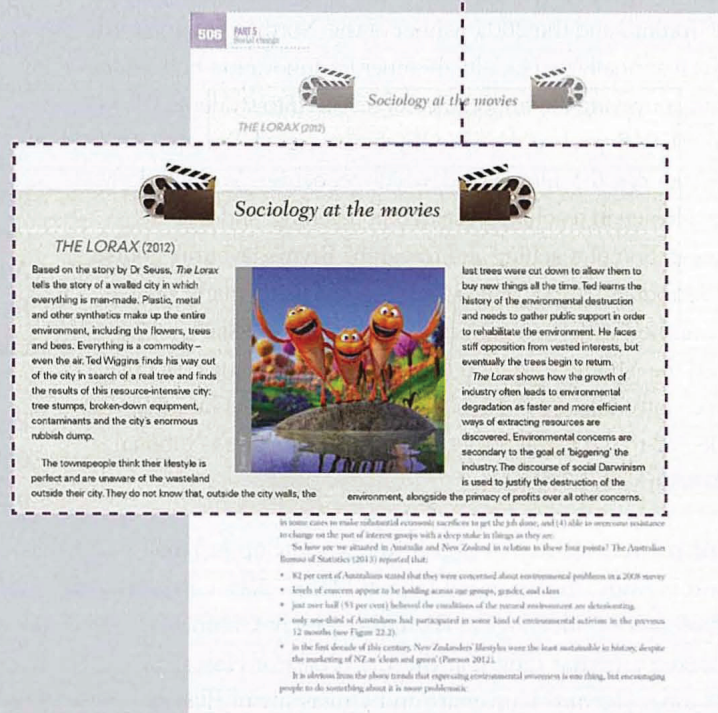
**Learning objectives** give you a clear sense of what each chapter will cover and what you should be able to do after reading the chapter.

Soon after they enter medical school, students become adept at managing the impression they make on other people. As Jack Haws and William Stauffer (1977) show in their study of professional socialization, students adopt a new medical vocabulary and wear white lab coats to set themselves apart from patients. They try to model their behaviour on that of doctors who have authority over them. They may ask questions they know the answer to so that they can impress their teachers. When dealing with patients, they may hide their ignorance under medical jargon to maintain their authority. By engaging in these and related practices,

**Key terms** are bolded when first introduced in the text and defined in the margin. You will also find them defined in the full **glossary** at the back of the text.



The **Sociology at the movies** boxes encompass brief reviews of contemporary and classic movies to emphasise the relationship between sociology and popular culture, and to enable you to see the sociological elements in everyday life.





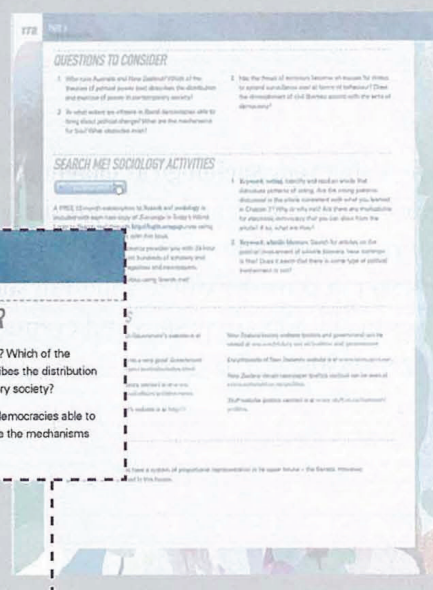
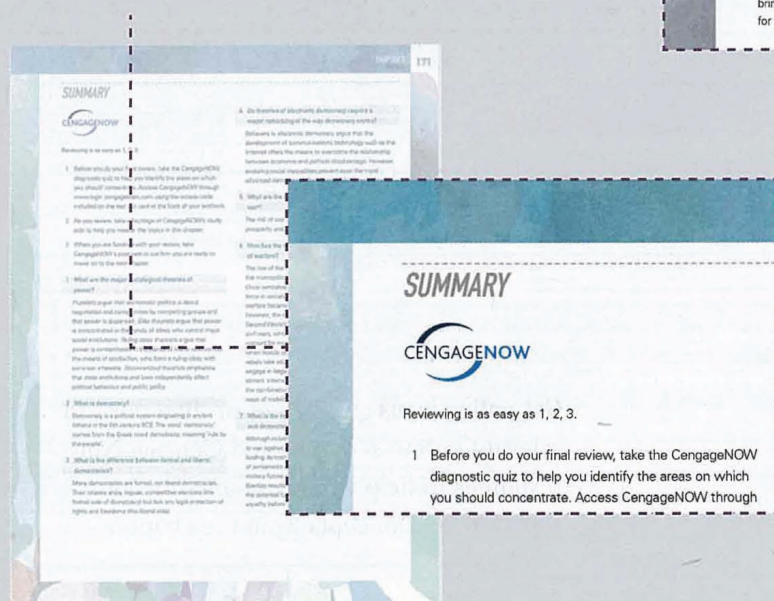




## End-of-chapter materials

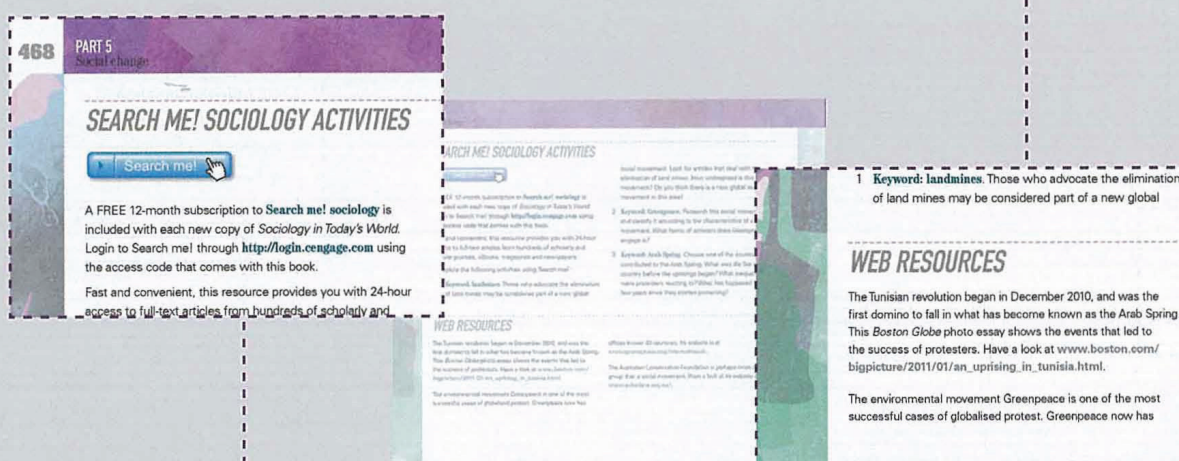
At the end of each chapter you'll find several tools to help you to review the chapter and key learning objectives, and also to extend your learning.

The **Summary** enables you to consolidate your understanding of the learning objectives for each chapter.



**Questions to consider** enable you to revise and test your comprehension of key concepts in each chapter.

The **Web resources** section helps you to extend your knowledge and understanding of the key points through wider online research.



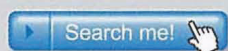
### Search me!

**Sociology activities** allow you to conduct further research by using the SearchMe! sociology database of full-text articles from hundreds of scholarly and popular journals and newspapers.



## Online resources for students

Visit <http://login.cengagebrain.com> and use the access code that comes with this book for 12 months' access to:



- *Sociology in Today's World* **CengageNOW** is an intelligent web-based system that provides a completely integrated package of diagnostic tests and interactive resources to create a personalised study plan for you. The individual study plan guides you to resources such as an eBook, video activities, glossary tools, weblinks, learning modules, interactive matching activities and more tools to help you master concepts quickly and easily.
- **Search me! Sociology.** Fast and convenient, this resource provides you with 24-hour access to full-text articles from hundreds of scholarly and popular journals and newspapers, including *The Australian* and *The New York Times*. Use the **Search me! Sociology activities** at the end of each chapter to get you started; then try your own search terms to explore topics further and find current references.

## FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

Cengage Learning is pleased to provide you with a selection of resources that will help you prepare for your lectures. These teaching tools are available on the instructors' companion website, accessible via <http://login.cengage.com>.

### Instructor's manual

The instructor's manual provides you with content to help set up and administer your subject. It includes chapter objectives, discussion questions solutions to end-of-chapter questions, journal activities, online video activities and more.

### PowerPoint presentations

Chapter-by-chapter PowerPoint presentations cover the main concepts addressed within the text and can be edited to suit your own requirements. Use these slides to enhance your lecture presentations and to reinforce the key principles of your subject, or for student handouts.

### ExamView test bank

**ExamView** ExamView helps you to create, customise and deliver tests in minutes for both print and online applications. The quick test wizard and online test wizard guide you step by step through the test-creation process. With ExamView's complete word-processing abilities, you can add an unlimited number of new questions to the bank, edit existing questions and build tests of up to 250 questions using up to 12 question types. You can also export the files into Blackboard or WebCT.

### Artwork

These digital files of graphs, pictures, film stills and flow charts from the text can be used in a variety of media. Add them into your course management system, use them within student handouts or copy them into lecture presentations.



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Robert Webb, Sara James and Theresa Petray





# PART 1

# FOUNDATIONS

- **CHAPTER 1** A sociological compass
- **CHAPTER 2** How sociologists do research

In Part 1, we introduce the basics of sociological thinking. As a discipline, sociology asks you to engage with questions such as ‘what is happening in society?’, ‘why is it happening?’, and ‘what are the effects?’ As we show you in Chapter 1, sociology has been asking these questions since it began. More importantly, sociologists have long asked other questions about how we solve the problems facing society. Chapter 1 gives an example of such a problem and shows you how sociologists can contribute to both understanding and solutions. We then introduce the key thinkers and schools of thought in sociology since its foundation as a discipline. Though the earliest sociologists lived in a world which is very different to ours, we can still use some of their key ideas to understand our own lives and societies. In Chapter 2 we move from theory to research. We explore the ways sociologists find evidence to answer the questions above. This chapter will help you understand how sociologists do research in order to help you critically assess the sociological research that you read about in this textbook and elsewhere.